

Dear Chairs Gilchrest and Lesser, Vice Chairs Gaston and Dathan, Ranking Members Seminara and Case, and Distinguished Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Philip Wilson, and I am a second-year resident in internal medicine at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. As a primary care resident at Bowdoin Street Health Center, I care for patients in the surrounding Dorchester community, largely comprised of immigrants. I graduated from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, where I directed clinic operations for Shade Tree Clinic, which delivered comprehensive primary and specialty care to patients in Middle Tennessee without health insurance.

I am writing to communicate my strong support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status, which is a critical step towards ensuring that members of Connecticut's immigrant communities are able to access needed healthcare services. In particular, this bill targets a crucial but often overlooked category—adolescents and young adults, who are increasingly at risk of developing chronic medical conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and early cardiovascular disease, yet are among the patients at highest risk of being lost to follow-up, especially in the absence of reliable coverage.

As a physician who has trained in a state without Medicaid expansion (Tennessee) and another where undocumented adults are not able to receive state-funded coverage (Massachusetts), I have seen first-hand the effects of lack of adequate insurance for patients in both the hospital and clinic: a young woman with a rare form of diabetes that came to clinic seeking care with a thirty-pound weight loss and dangerously high blood glucose, a man unable to be safely discharged from the hospital in order to receive ongoing care for his newly diagnosed cancer, and many similarly heartbreaking and preventable stories. These patients did not face a disease that proved difficult to diagnose or with no treatment options; instead, their healthcare providers lacked the ability to carry out their clinical judgement and provide their patients the care that was needed.

Connecticut has an opportunity to become a leader in the Northeast—and within the country—by giving its world-class medical centers, nurses, and clinicians the ability to provide that care to all their patients. As such, I strongly support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Philip Wilson, MD